

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

APRIL 26, 2005

PRESENT: James Gage, David Hurley, Jesse Amsel, Shawn Costello, Glenn Eberly and Walter Moody

ABSENT: None

STAFF

PRESENT: Reanna Goodreau, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Costello called the Ellington Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO GO OUT OF AGENDA ORDER TO REVIEW ITEM #1 UNDER UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Review of Age Restricted Cluster Housing Greenspace Plan: Pioneer Builders of Ellington, LLC—22 Maple Street, APN 073-014-0000

Andie Carrie, project engineer, gave a brief presentation of the proposal. He presented a detailed greenspace plan. Mr. Carrier explained that since this is a common interest community, the maintenance of the plantings will be included in the homeowners' association declaration. Tom Savage, Pioneer Builders of Ellington, explained that the homeowner's association must provide documentation to the Town of Ellington that they are abiding by the age restriction. Chairman Costello asked about the maturity for the plantings and was told that the evergreens growth rate is about one foot per year.

MOVED (AMSEL), SECONDED (MOODY) AND PASSED (RECUSED: HURLEY) TO SUPPORT THE GREENSPACE CONCEPT FOR THE ARCH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED BY PIONEER BUILDERS OF ELLINGTON, LLC LOCATED AT 22 MAPLE STREET, APN 073-014-0000.

THE COMMISSION RETURNED TO ORIGINAL AGENDA ORDER.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review of Age Restricted Cluster Housing Greenspace Plan: Development Services, LLC—Windermere Avenue, APN 017-004-0000 & 018-003-0000

Jay Fisher, Development Services, LLC, stated that he wanted to get preliminary input from the Conservation Commission for the greenspace plan. He reviewed the existing site conditions and noted that he had met with the DEP and the Hockanum River Watershed Association regarding the Hockanum River. Mr. Fisher stated that he had met with the Planning and Zoning Commission at a preliminary meeting and noted their desire for a trail connection along the Hockanum River, but that they did not think that access through the development was the best choice for an access way.

Rod Shaw, landscape architect, reviewed several concept plans to show the commission how they came up with the newest plan. He reviewed the plan and noted that there are 123 units and a more formal greenspace greenway to the Hockanum River. Mr. Shaw explained that there are approximately 7 acres of greenspace from the Hockanum River to the units, approximately 4 acres in the greenway, and approximately 7-8 acres surrounding the units for a total of approximately 43% of greenspace onsite.

Jay Fisher stated that there will be buffer plantings and possible berms along property boundaries and plantings around the homes. There would possibly be a patio/garden area near the community building. Chairman Costello asked what types of plantings there would be and was told that the exact types are not known yet, but there would be a mix of shade, evergreen, and flowering trees and plants. Chairman Costello suggested bringing information about the layout and types of plants the next time they present to the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Hurley suggested keeping as far from the Hockanum River with any disturbance related to the construction of the units. There was a discussion about the ownership of the greenspace along the Hockanum River and Mr. Fisher stated that they are open to discussing it further.

2. Discussion of the Status of Crystal Lake Water Monitoring Program

Commissioner Moody gave the background of the Crystal Lake Monitoring Program. He stated that the Town and the Crystal Lake Association jointly funded the monitoring program, but then the Association did not have the funds to continue so the Town took over the funding, but the Association continued with in-kind services (i.e. taking the samples and bringing them to the lab). Commissioner Moody stated that during last year's budget cuts, the program funding was eliminated. He is requesting that the Conservation Commission support the request to fund the monitoring program in the FY 2005-06 budget. He emphasized the importance of keeping a yearly accounting of the quality of the lake.

Chairman Costello stated that Crystal Lake is a natural resource, which is supervised by the Conservation Commission. He continued by stating that since the lake is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission, the Commission should request that the funding be reinstated. The commission discussed their role with the lake and the monitoring program.

MOVED (MOODY), SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO REQUEST THAT THE BOARD OF FINANCE INCLUDE FUNDING FOR CRYSTAL LAKE MONITORING PROGRAM IN THE FY 2005-06 BUDGET.

3. Discussion re: Preparations for DEP Grant for November 2005

Commissioner Gage stated that if there will be a grant round in November 2005, the commission should start targeting certain properties for the grant. He reviewed the steps for applying for a grant. Commissioner Gage suggested pursuing parcels in the Porter Road area. Commissioner Hurley suggested targeting farm land in the western section of town where there are extreme development pressures. Chairman Costello requested having a decision for possible properties for the grant at the May 31, 2005 meeting.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION TABLED THIS ITEM TO THE MAY 31, 2005 MEETING IN ORDER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE PARCELS FOR THE DEP GRANT.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2. Discussion with the Hockanum River Watershed Association (HRWA) re:
Implementation of a Trail System by the HRWA

Chairman Costello stated that he would like to table this item until he is able to speak with Julie Gross of the Hockanum River Watershed Association.

TABLED TO THE MAY 31, 2005 MEETING.

3. Discussion of Town Owned Open Space Parcels on Shenipsit Street, APN 030-005-0000 & 021-031-0005

Chairman Costello stated that one of the functions of the Conservation Commission is to set policies and oversee town owned open space parcels. He continued by stating that he had a meeting with the First Selectman and the Public Works Director about the role of the Conservation Commission. Chairman Costello stated that all parties agreed that the commission is in charge of supervising and managing the parcels.

The commission discussed both parcels on Shenipsit Street. The Batz property (APN 030-005-0000) is currently used by scouts and some land is farmed. Commissioner Hurley suggested looking into expanding the property by purchasing adjacent parcels, if possible. Commissioners walked the other open space parcel (APN 021-031-0005) and noted that it was another great piece of open space for wildlife, but that access to the parcel was difficult.

Chairman Costello requested that the commission review different parcels each meeting in order to see their potential for different uses. He asked that the Ellington Highlands subdivision open space parcel be placed on the May agenda for their review.

4. Commission Workshop on Open Space Plan

Chairman Costello requested that the commission hold a special meeting to review the open space draft and make changes as necessary.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING BEFORE THE MAY 31, 2005 MEETING IN ORDER TO REVIEW THE DRAFT OPEN SPACE PLAN.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of CGS 7-131a

Chairman Costello stated that he had a meeting with the First Selectman and the Public Works Director about the role of the Conservation Commission. Chairman Costello stated that all parties agreed that the commission is in charge of supervising and managing the parcels. The commission reviewed CGS 7-131a. There was a discussion of what the commission was empowered to do under 7-131a and Chairman Costello explained that the First Selectman verbally told him that the commission has all authorities under CGS 7-131a.

2. Approval of March 29, 2005 Meeting Minutes

MOVED (AMSEL), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MARCH 29, 2005 MEETING MINUTES WITH THE FOLLOWING CORRECTION: PAGE 3, UNFINISHED BUSINESS, ITEM #2, THIRD LINE OF THE MOTION: DELETE "BOS & THE FINANCE OFFICER."

3. Correspondence:

- a. Memo to Finance Department from Dennis Milanovich dated 3-29-05 (Temporary Part Time Position)
- b. Letter for all Agencies from the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection dated 4-1-05 (DEP State Parks and Field Services Drainage Maintenance Plan)
- c. Letter to Planning & Zoning Commission from Scott Luginbuhl and David Luginbuhl dated 4-6-05 (Amount of Appraisal)
- d. Memo to PZC and CC from Frank Chiaramonte dated 4-4-05 (Transportation)
- e. Conservation Options for Landowners

SO NOTED.

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (MOODY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADD TO THE AGENDA: DISCUSSION OF MEMO FROM ATTORNEY BOYAN TO MATT DAVIS RE: FEE IN-LIEU OF OPEN SPACE.

The commission reviewed the letter from the Town Attorney, which was handed out that evening by staff. Commission Moody noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission has the authority to take recent sales data and suggested that the PZC do that since appraisals are usually lower than sales data. Reanna Goodreau explained that the PZC was waiving the appraisal and using sales data until the Oak Hill Estates subdivision, when certain people were unhappy about the fee in-lieu of open space that the town received based on the sales price.

Commissioner Gage stated that the PZC discussed the fee in-lieu of open space for the Crestwood Estates IV subdivision at their April 25, 2005. Based on the Town Attorney's letter, the PZC revised the fee in-lieu to reflect the appraisal submitted by the applicant.

Commissioner Gage also explained the chairman of the PZC requested an opinion from the Town Attorney about creating a list of approved appraisers. Commissioner Hurley suggested that the Conservation Commission contact the state legislator about amending the law regarding open space fee in-lieu.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (AMSEL), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Reanna Goodreau
Recording Secretary